

BEST AVAILABLE COPYIn the Specification:

Please amend Paragraph 5 as follows:

Programmable elements such as those discussed above represent one method for implementing redundancy and logic programmability in a semiconductor. Some conventional programming events, in which a programmable element is programmed to carry current as needed in a chip, are fairly violent occurrences that result in substantial mechanical deformation of the element. In one conventional technique, for example, fuses constructed from metal lines are blown using a laser beam to evaporate the metal. This technique can cause damage to structures adjacent to the fuse, whether due to the spattering of molten metal, the inability to focus the laser beam only on the targeted fuse, unwanted reflections from the laser beam off the target fuse, or other reasons. The conventional solution to this problem~~[[--]]~~ of placing fuses far away from other structures on the chip ~~is chip is~~ itself a problem because it leads to results such as increased device size, higher costs, and lowered efficiency. Electrically programmable fuses, or E-fuses, are programmed by applying a high voltage to them, and thus do not suffer from the problems affecting laser blown fuses. E-fuses may thus be closely spaced on a chip. Unfortunately, however, E-fuses suffer from reliability problems. For example, the blown metal in an E-fuse can oxidize in a moist environment, causing "grow-back." The size of the metal pieces increases when the metal oxidizes, allowing them to connect and once again permit current flow.